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9 August 1974

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CURRENT ISSUES IN THE MUTUAL AND BALANCED FORCE REDUCTION (MBFR) NEGOTIATIONS

The Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction talks have been conducted over the last year in Vienna between representatives of NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. The objectives from the West's point of view are to reduce the force levels deployed in Europe in such a way as to reduce the likelihood of war and to reduce the disproportion in the size of the forces of the two sides in Europe.

The reductions are to be from those forces now positioned in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and West Germany, of NATO and Poland, Czechoslovakia and East Germany of the Warsaw Pact. The nations involved are the seven countries mentioned above, plus the US, Canada, and the UK, who have forces in West Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands; and the Soviets.

Since the initial proposals were introduced there have been no substantial compromises suggested by either side, but there have been a number of minor concessions by both sides which suggest that some agreement is both possible and likely. The positions as they now stand are outlined below:

NATO APPROACH

WARSAW PACT APPROACH

I. Time Phasing of Reductions

Only US and Soviet forces would be reduced in phase one.

The West has modified its original proposal during the course of negotiations and has advanced the possibility that (1) there would be no increase of NATO or Warsaw Pact ground forces between phase one and phase two; (2) that US and Soviet reductions in phase one would be followed by the second phase reductions after a "fixed period of time," (3) that phase one reduction would be subject to review after a reasonable period of time, (4) that non-US NATO participants (except Luxembourg) would reduce their forces in the second phase.

All forces would reduce in each phase and that reduction would take place over a three year period with an initial reduction in 1975 of 20,000 men from both sides.

During the course of the negotiations the east has modified its original position, by advancing the proposal that all parties would make symbolic reductions, but that US and Soviet reductions could be implemented before the other parties actually reduced their forces. According to the terms of this proposal the British and Canadians might have to reduce at the same time as the US and Soviet forces because they are, like the Soviets and Americans, forces stationed on foreign soil.

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II. Comprehensiveness

NATO seeks to have reductions made only in ground forces.

The US would reduce 15% of its ground forces presently in the reductions area -- about 29,000 soldiers. Soviet reductions would amount to a tank army, (five divisions, including about 68,000 Soviet soldiers and 1,700 battle tanks).

There has been discussion within the private councils of NATO on a US proposal to reduce, in addition to the above, some of the US nuclear support to NATO, presently located in the reductions area. The form of the nuclear reductions proposal (which has still not yet been made public in Vienna) includes reduction of up to 1,000 nuclear warheads, 36 Pershing missile launchers and 54 F-4 fighter aircraft. The British and West Germans are apprehensive over introduction of the nuclear option.*

The Warsaw Pact proposal specifies reduction of ground and air forces and includes nuclear weapons.

They have suggested in the course of the negotiations that a first step might apply only to ground forces, and that air and nuclear reductions might be deferred. The Pact negotiators have suggested that they might be willing to accept an aggregate ceiling applied to each side instead of explicit national subceilings for forces in the reduction area.

*Although the Allies do not completely oppose the inclusion of air/nuclear elements, they would like either to present a smaller package than envisaged by the US or to ask a higher price for it. The Allies are particularly concerned about the reduction of F-4s because of their dual-capability and the danger that their inclusion might enlarge the scope of the negotiations to cover air forces generally. Some Allies have suggested including only warheads and possibly Pershings in phase one. The FRG and UK have indicated that they would like to use the air/nuclear package to obtain reciprocal ceilings and possibly reductions of similar Pact elements.

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III. Equity

The NATO Allies are pressing for a common ceiling on ground force manpower which could produce equity of results, i.e., that a ground force manpower ceiling be set on each side at, for instance, 700,000 soldiers in the reduction area. This approach has been called the common ceiling approach.

The Warsaw Pact proposal is for equal percentage or equal aggregate reduction which would maintain the existing ratio of forces in the reduction areas.

The east has not yet indicated any flexibility with respect to this provision of their reduction proposal.

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OF NATO AND WARSAW PACT FORCES IN
THE PROPOSED REDUCTIONS AREA

	<u>NATO</u>	<u>Warsaw Pact</u>
Ground Forces Manpower	791,000	952,000
Air Forces Manpower	196,000	208,000
Total Manpower	987,000	1,160,000
Combat Aircraft	2,000	3,700
Tanks in Active Units	6,000	16,000
Tanks in Storage	2,705	2,100
Total Tanks	8,705	18,100

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